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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000855

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SE NATSIOS AND AF/SPG, NSC
FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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SUBJECT: COMMANDER OF JOINT INTEGRATED UNITS PROVIDES GRIM
ASSESSMENT

REF: KHARTOUM 350

Classified By: CDA R. Powers, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The commander of Sudan's Joint Integrated Units (JIU) provided a grim assessment of the JIUs, their progress toward forming the nucleus of a new national army under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and the prospects for withdrawal of the Khartoum-based Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) from southern Sudan by the CPA's July 9, 2007, deadline. The assessment followed a testy meeting in Juba of the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC) and a more amicable, first-ever conference of JIU commanders. End Summary.

Khartoum Accused of Undermining JIUs

¶2. (C) Maj. Gen. Thomas Cirillo told Acting CG Juba May 25 that two and a half years after the signing of the CPA, JIUs are falling far short of their key function under the CPA--forming the nucleus of an integrated national army. Cirillo accused the government in Khartoum of deliberately sabotaging Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) elements in the JIUs. Cirillo also expressed doubt that SAF will complete its mandatory withdrawal from southern Sudan by the July 9 deadline set by the CPA.

¶3. (C) One illustration of the JIUs' problems, Cirillo said, is that command of the ostensibly integrated forces has never been formally transferred to him. Under the CPA, command rotates between SAF and the SPLA. Cirillo said he "assumes" he is now overall national commander of the JIUs, a post he was originally slated to take up in January 2007. Cirillo was previously the JIUs' deputy commander.

¶4. (C) The normally even-keeled general was uncharacteristically bitter about Khartoum's lack of support for SPLA elements in the JIUs. Under the CPA, JIUs are composed equally of SAF and SPLA forces. Both components are to be "treated equally" under the agreement and all JIU expenses are to be funded by the Government of National Unity (GNU). Although SPLA forces in the JIUs have been receiving their pay from the national government with only occasional interruptions, Cirillo said, the GNU has consistently refused to provide funds for food, training, transport, ammunition or other necessities. "Service money" for such expenses was released once by the national government in November 2006, Cirillo explained, and since then no further funds have been released.

¶5. (C) "I expect a crisis of food," Cirillo continued, because the government has not released adequate funds for food or for transporting the food to SPLA troops in the JIUs.

With the coming rainy season, he said, it will be difficult to deliver food overland to many units, necessitating expensive airdrops. Cirillo also claimed that the SPLA had "lost over 100 men" in JIU units to various diseases, while the GNU has failed to provide medicines or adequate medical care. SAF units in the JIUs, he asserted, are well provided for under pre-existing arrangements.

Abyei, Other Armed Groups, and SAF Withdrawal

¶6. (C) SAF is heavily deployed in the contested border region of Abyei, Cirillo reported, and "armed to the teeth." Three different SAF brigades are in the region, plus a SAF JIU battalion, Cirillo said. The SAF forces are equipped with tanks and "mounted vehicles," he reported. The SPLA is represented in Abyei by only about 300 soldiers attached to the JIU, he claimed. Abyei is increasingly likely to be a flashpoint for conflict, Cirillo said. Having failed to recognize the findings of the Abyei Border Commission, it is unlikely that the Khartoum government will withdraw its forces from the region anytime soon, Cirillo said, and certainly not before the July 9 deadline under the CPA. Cirillo also said he is concerned about SAF's willingness to withdraw from Upper Nile State and areas of Unity State before the deadline.

¶7. (C) Cirillo complained about the deployment of former SAF-backed southern militia into SAF components of the JIUs. Under the CPA, all militia were expected to join either the SPLA or SAF by January 2007. The SPLA contend that some former members of the so-called Other Armed Groups (OAGs) have been deployed almost immediately into the JIUs,

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violating the spirit of the CPA, which specifies that JIUs should be formed from regular forces. The issue arose at the May 24 meeting of the CJMC in Juba, Cirillo said. SAF representatives reportedly claimed that there was no prohibition on incorporating former militia into JIUs, and also objected to any discussion of OAGs at the CJMC. Instead, SAF contended that the issue should be taken up at a policy level, by the CPA's semi-dormant OAGs Collaborative Committee. Both SPLA and UNMIS representatives at the CJMC rejected these views, Cirillo said.

One Testy Meeting,
And One Good One

¶8. (C) The latest CJMC meeting in Juba was "tougher," "more political" and "more confrontational" than in the past, according to UNMIS southern Sudan coordinator Peter Schumann. Cirillo and SPLA Chief of Staff Oyai Deng, who also attended the meeting, said that tempers flared at various points, with representatives of both sides threatening to withdraw. In addition to the issue of OAGs, participants grappled with the revelation that SAF had failed to declare its remaining forces near Pibor in Jonglei State, Schumann said. Deng, the current chairman of the Joint Defense Board (JDB), departed May 26 for a long-delayed JDB meeting in Khartoum. Deng confirmed that his relations with SAF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Hajj Ahmed el-Jailee Hajj Ahmed ("el-Jailee") remain strained. The SPLA's biggest worry, Deng said, is SAF's "big procurement" of weapons from China and other suppliers.

¶9. (C) In contrast to the testy CJMC meeting, JIU commanders held a successful and largely amicable three-day meeting in Juba May 22-24 under Cirillo's leadership. SAF and SPLA representatives "talked openly" at the first-ever conference, Cirillo reported. Many of the commanders, Cirillo said, were meeting each other for the first time. The objectives of the conference were to discuss the "concept of a unified command;" address the logistical, administrative and other

difficulties besetting the JIUs; and attempt to develop a joint training program. All of these issues should have been addressed long ago under the CPA timetable, Cirillo claimed. Joint training for the JIUs was put on hold for months ahead of the February 2007 promulgation of an agreed "common military doctrine." But since February, Cirillo said, there have been no concrete measures to develop a joint training program. In some despair, he asked whether the international community will hold Khartoum accountable for failure to support the JIUs.

Comment

110. (C) On the eve of the scheduled July 9 final withdrawal of SAF and SPLA forces to their respective sides of the 1956 border, the CPA's vision of integrated JIU units under joint command, with identical pay, benefits and training is falling far short of reality. The July 9 deadline for SAF and SPLA redeployment will be a key benchmark in implementation of the CPA. We do not fully share the JIU commander's skepticism over scheduled SAF withdrawal from the South, at least outside the oil-rich region of Abyei. The national government's commitment to making the JIUs a success is in serious doubt, however, and with it the broader security arrangements that underpin the CPA. End comment.
POWERS